

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments eNews Focus: On Being Ready May 2018



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From the Director's desk...

Hawaii burning-- are you ready?

Our family visited the Big Island in February. Since we traveled shortly after the Korean missile false alert, I quipped to the All Hazards Emergency Management group (NWAHEMR) group that I was on a business trip to inspect the system. Instead, the trip provided a reflection on risk awareness in Colorado, now magnified by lava flowing in our footsteps. As you may be seeing for yourself through the news, I observed Hawaiians acknowledging and abiding differently in risk than us mainlanders.

"Each day Kilauea belches 5,000 tons of Sulphur dioxide," according to a [Hawaii Revealed](#), 8th Edition, and VOG (Volcanic Fog) is reported as weather. Hawaiians inhabit the most isolated land mass on the planet, so a necessary independence begets preparedness as well as a heightened awareness of natural risk. Among islanders living between the twin life forces of volcano and 2,500 miles of open ocean is a palpable reverence for how paradise is intertwined with destruction. That perception was reinforced in reading "[Madame Pele's Grip on Hawaii](#)" in The Atlantic Magazine May 10th.



The day our family returned to the mainland, we traced the Colorado River's path across the vast, barren Southwest - at least I did out the airplane window. Across the high country of Colorado, the San Juan mountains were eerily devoid of February snow. I contemplated those same skies opaque with smoke from wildfires this summer, knowing the reaction will be surprise and suppress.



In the West where we have managed to control the twin forces of irregular water supply and wildfire, we are less accepting of risk. Perhaps that denial is embedded in our pretending that our landscapes are "pristine" even as we have "successfully" managed the annually inconsistent snowpack through Colorado Water Law, and an extensive system of reservoirs; even as we have "successfully" fought forest fires for a century. Our Rocky

Mountain, high desert civilization has grown predictable, allowing municipalities and farmers to flourish unnaturally while extended "drought" continues to stress-test our management and play with our cumulative denial. We don't have a parallel to Madame Pele to check our hubris.

We look at water supply and forest health in unrealistic terms at our own peril. As Brad Piehl, a watershed planner with JW associates shared with the NWCCOG council on May 24 (as he has with the Forest Health Task force in Summit County), fighting every wildfire has reshaped our forests placing them at increased risk of drought and, ironically, wildfire. Moreover, the past decade of wildfire alone has broken the USFS budget, and nearly broken the effectiveness of the Forest Service itself as firefighting costs consumed all other capacity. Though a fire funding "fix" was passed for 2020, thanks to the Colorado Congressional delegation, the USFS has not been restored to effectiveness today or redistributed funding to forest management and recreation (see below). Nor have we educated the public to a degree that we can part from our dangerous urge to suppress fires without public outcry. The disconnect is damaging our institutions and our ability to plan effectively.

Human nature and media don't help. Acknowledging risk is frightening. On CNN, the question was asked of Hawaiians, why would people live there? (Clearly CNN has not swam in thermally warmed sea water with coffee-table-sized green sea turtles at the Kapoho tide pools to ask such a question.)

On that note, during our last morning in Hawaii, we snorkeled just a few miles from Pahoia where advancing lava is now engulfing a neighborhood in flames. We swam together among the undersea gardens made by the pillowed lava, hardly yet smoothed by the pounding surf. The afternoon before we had biked through the ghost community of Kalapana, inundated by lava in 1990, then hiked over miles of rough volcanic rock to see actual lava flowing inch-by-inch and crackling right in front of us. On such a trek, it is difficult to not understand that but for the volcano, there would be no island. I said to the kids, "it is not often that you can wake from an afternoon nap to go see the world being made before your eyes."



Sometimes you have to travel a few thousand miles to see the world with different eyes. Our homes and communities across Colorado pepper a drought-prone high desert with forests whose natural cycle includes massive wildfire followed by floods. Today in Hawaii, the creation and destruction of the natural world are one, we could be much better prepared were we to see ourselves so clearly.

Jon Stavney

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**Forest Service Wildfire Funding Fix,
don't celebrate yet - We only have "Steve"**



At the May 11, Eagle County Mayors/Managers meeting, USFS District Ranger Aaron Mayville shared a power point with a photo of his one seasonal ranger "Steve." Steve manages 37 trail heads, 67 developed camp sites, and over 500 dispersed camp sites which are increasingly used for "seasonal housing" for the bargain price of \$40,000/year. Ten years ago, more than 7 USFS staffers managed the same portfolio at a cost of \$270,000. The entire recreation budget across all 5 ranger districts of the White River National Forest is roughly \$2,000,000. As Mayville pointed out, this means that his management staff diverts time from other matters relevant to local jurisdictions such as developing "a management plan for Booth Creek Falls, or an IGA for trails with Avon, or investigating developing a campground at LEDE reservoir."

Commissioner Jeannie McQueeney clarified that Mayville attended the meeting at the request of the Eagle County Commissioners, lest anyone confuse the presentation for begging. Mayville was floating an idea already in place in some other WRNF ranger districts. Garfield county

supplements their districts budget to help pay for management of Hanging Lake. Summit County pays roughly \$150,000/year to supplement management of the Dillon Ranger District mostly through good neighbor fire mitigation efforts. So when the idea floated by Vail Manager Greg Clifton for Eagle County Partners to fund a "Front Country Rangers Program" at the last mayors managers meeting, the idea of local governments supplementing USFS district resources to manage assets that drive the local economy wasn't a new one.

Supplementing USFS recreation management budgets has become more of an acute need as drought and wildfire have also devastated US Forest Service budgets. The trend hamstring managers in one of the most visited places on earth-The White River National Forest-from managing recreation, planning for other multiple uses, including ironically, activities to mitigate fire risk. Thanks to our Congressional delegation, this Federal budget finally has a "fire fix." But beware. High Country counties could be back-filling USFS budgets to keep trails and campgrounds open until funding is returned to USFS budget line items where they belong.

The trend seems especially unfair when revenues from White River National Forest Ski areas provide a net gain to the Federal government. With an operating budget of \$12.5 M, the WRNF sends back \$25 M to Congress. Colorado Senators Gardner and Bennett have sought legislation that would keep that money in the USFS rather than the General Fund. Further legislation "Ski Fee Retention Bill" S-2501 introduced March 8th, 2018 for returning revenues to be used exclusively for managing ski areas, would free up capacity for other efforts. At the Eagle County Mayors/Managers meeting it was requested of NWCCOG to draft a letter to the Colorado Congressional Delegation and lobby for funding to be returned to recreation management and other key multiple uses. That idea will be discussed with NWCCOG Council.

[Being Wildfire Ready](#)

What if, to a new season of massive wildfire, the reaction will not be surprise and suppress?

What if the reaction went something like this: a lightning strike on Pinon Mountain causes an excitement in a nearby community that the regenerative wildfire season has arrived again after a number of abnormally wet years. Wildfire Ready neighborhoods will have "hardened their homes" with exterior materials and defensible spaces, prepared go-bags, family communication plans, allowing them to know they have done all they can to be prepared.



Their neighborhood has practiced evacuation, and residents know where to get information, so that as the incident widens they can observe, deeply in awe of the transformative natural powers which have carved their amazing place on earth-while they going through pre-evacuation steps written on the back of the door.

Laugh if you will, but [Larimer County](#) has moved toward this level of preparation to encourage "fire adapted communities." In isolated places in the NWCCOG region, like prescribed burns in Pitkin County (read "[Putting Fire Back in the Forest, starting in Aspen](#)"), and through community fuels reduction projects in Summit County, acceptance of fire risk has shifted to local mitigation efforts on the ground. Some of these efforts are led by entities like Glenwood Springs Fire Protection District, or in the case of Cordillera Metro District led with the help of Eric Lovgren, Community Risk Manager for Eagle County who has helped extend a recognition of risk to private property owners through property by property risk assessments.

Most of our communities, especially those which have not yet suffered, need better risk awareness at all levels which is why NWCCOG will be hosting a Disaster Preparedness Summit for local officials this fall. Fire/flood devastation cycles have decimated many Colorado municipalities in the past decade which is why Emergency Managers in your county are hosting Procurement Exercises.

One could ask after a fire, why would anyone live there? It will be asked on the news. The better questions would be:

- What are the risks of living where I do?
- How has our household prepared to be self-sufficient for 3 days or more?
- How have the local governments identified predictable risk and mitigated it

Eagle County Resource Mobilization Exercise

NWCCOG had the opportunity to observe Barry Smith, Eagle County's emergency manager hosting a procurement exercise on May 3rd. In it, municipalities and the school district were better prepared for when an event scales up beyond the capabilities of local response agencies, and how proper procurement preparations facilitate any future reimbursement.

Steve Denny from the State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management led the exercise. He underscored the object of the exercise by pointing out that the 2015 Colorado floods had \$470 Million dollars in recoverable damages (Hurricane Sandy was \$18 Billion). Through the Stafford Act the maximum federal share of that cost is up to 75% of the

total. State and local entities pick up the rest. In an ideal situation the states split the remaining 25 %. In the case of the 2015 event, local entities had \$188 million owed.



COLORADO

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Department of Public Safety

As Denny said, "It is easy to call out the window for help and people will come, but how you track them, their equipment, track feeding them, housing them and the rest, that requires preparation."

To the point, that 75% of Federal dollars are only eligible to a community that can accurately track their resources and those from responding entities (people and equipment) in and out of an event, and which has within their legal authority to deploy those resources. Equipment needs to be registered on a state database (ask your County Emergency Manager for more information). That extends to heavy equipment as well as shelter or other facilities and personnel. The point of the procurement exercise is that getting procurement rights starts well BEFORE an incident occurs and escalates. Denny used the example of a special district fire chief who spent \$375,000 that he was not authorized to spend and didn't have in the budget - nearly a half-million-dollars. He used another example of a \$22,000 hotel bill for housing responders for which there was no record of who exactly stayed in the rooms-not reimbursable.

Participating in the exercise were some of the 7 incorporated towns, one of the two ambulance districts, and representatives from 4 of the 5 fire districts in Eagle County, as well as Vail Dispatch (PSAP) federal wildfire partners and Eagle County School District. The Summit, Garfield and Routt County emergency managers observed. One lesson noted by Eagle Town Manager Brandy Reitter is that towns need an Emergency Spending Resolution. Eagle County's is Appendix X in the Emergency Operations Plan. It pre-designates spending amounts for key directors in case of emergency, and further designates spending authority to a single County Commissioner, bypassing the need for the usual meeting notice and quorum. Those limits are budgeted and established at limits to bridge the County to a next level designation on very short notice.

Disaster Planning has an Economic Side



The economic component of risk is statewide. Resilience wraps economic planning and disaster planning together. Colorado agencies are beginning to encourage communities to think in these inter-disciplinary terms. The alternative to being frank about risks reminds me of the communications tightrope a Colorado Governor walked in 2012 with wildfires engulfing the state in smoke, with multiple disasters declared, who interjected that "not all of the state is burning" lest the tourists spend dollars elsewhere. Surviving a year without snow, followed by a summer of wildfires, and a 50% dip in tourists... for a year; or scenario planning for a local grocery store closing-that is "planning for predictable disturbance" as Ian Hyde of the [Colorado Resiliency Office](#)

noted at the 2018 NWCCOG Regional Economic Summit on May 4th. Being frank about risk is sensitive with an economy 64% dependent upon visitors as we learned from Elizabeth Garner, the Colorado State Demographer at the [Economic Summit](#).

Climax Mine, Moly, QQ and You



NWCCOGs' Water Program-QQ recently hosted a two-day retreat in Eagle. Torie Jarvis has published a [summary](#) of that event on the QQ program page of our website. QQ thanks all who attended and especially outgoing QQ Chair, Rachel Richards. One of the benefits of having water-quality expertise in QQ is that our staff can adapt and respond to local needs before they arise.

One of the services Lane Wyatt provides with QQ is ongoing representation of the region at the Water Quality Control Commission. That role recently expanded at the request of local stakeholders downstream from Climax Mines most specifically along Ten Mile Creek who were alarmed at a Climax proposal to relax statewide standards for molybdenum. Though many were quick to view this darkly, local stakeholders recognized that they did not have the expertise to evaluate Climax's toxicology studies.

Through Wyatt, they met and decided to hire experts jointly to provide an independent assessment. Wyatt also has a very strong relationship with environmental staff at Climax which has stated all along the purpose of the process is to have "more defensible standards" built on an improved scientific basis. Because of QQ and member participation in the WQCC process, Climax agreed to delay their request to change the molybdenum standard to allow for additional research on an appropriate standard.

Wyatt and key members will continue to engage on this issue into 2019. For a more detailed overview read [Wyatt's Summary Memo](#) dated May 2nd, 2018.

Save the Date: August 29-30th

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENERGY ACADEMY

CSU Extension's Local Government Energy Academy workshop helps local governments take advantage of energy funding and programs that can save money and improve sustainability.



Attendees of LGEA workshops will:

- understand options for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and alternative transportation fuels for local government operations and whole communities
- learn how to navigate the menu of energy programs and funding opportunities available now
- hear directly from communities that have already experimented with energy initiatives
- be able to identify the opportunities that work best for your community
- make direct connections with agencies, consultants, and contractors who can help you implement next steps

August 29-30th, 2018

**Eagle County Building
Eagle, Colorado**

For more information visit:

lgea.colostate.edu



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



EAGLE COUNTY



Local Government Energy Academy and Survey

NWCCOG is providing support to Colorado State University Extension and a number of member jurisdictions in hosting a two-day "**Local Government Energy Academy**" to assist staff and local leaders in developing energy reduction goals, establishing goals, and/or seeking projects to implement. We are seeking input from member jurisdictions in order to compile baseline feedback on current efforts to shape the program. Please take a moment to complete a brief survey to provide this feedback.

[SURVEY LINK HERE](#)

How Criminals Steal \$37 Billion a Year from America's Elderly

Telephone pitchers, online scammers and even family members target the most vulnerable among us. And it's about to get worse. Marjorie Jones trusted the man who called to tell her she'd won a sweepstakes prize, saying she could collect the winnings once she paid the taxes and fees. After she wired the first payment, he and other callers kept adding conditions to convince her to send more money. As the scheme progressed, Jones, who was legally blind and lived alone in a two-story house in Moss Bluff, Louisiana, depleted her savings, took out a reverse mortgage and cashed in a life insurance policy. She didn't tell her family, not even ... [Read the full story](#)

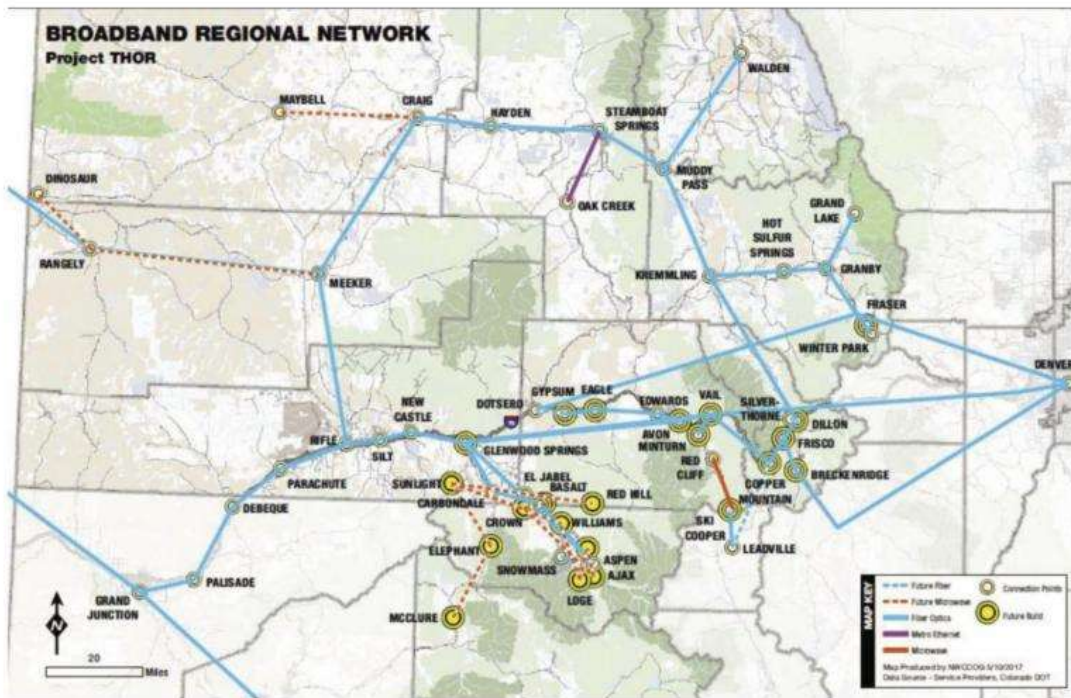


Help protect your loved ones.
Article from Nick Lieber - Bloomberg

City of Aspen looks to open up its broadband network

The city of Aspen took an initial step this week toward expanding its capabilities as a broadband service provider and opening its fiber-optic network to other community partners.

Aspen City Council at Tuesday's work session approved a request from the information technology department to spend \$86,000 on consulting and start up costs to create a "MeetMe Center."



The centers are part of larger initiative, known as Project THOR, promoted by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, which is seeking to expand broadband capabilities on the Western Slope.

The MeetMe Center will leverage existing city of Aspen data-server infrastructure located in city hall. Currently, some government sites in the upper valley are connected via a dedicated fiber network running from the downtown core to the Aspen Business Center, the Aspen Recreation Center, the water treatment plant and the county's health and human services building. Read the full story from the Aspen Daily here.



SAVE THE DATE

10th Annual
**Caregiver
Conference**

June 1, 2018

Speakers • Free Lunch • Pampering • Vendors

9 AM - 3:30 PM

Glenwood Springs Community Center
100 Wulfsohn Road, Glenwood Springs

RSVP required by May 18th
www.2018ColoradoCaregiverConference.eventbrite.com
or (970) 665-0041

Garfield County Senior Programs, Alpine Area Agency on Aging &
Northwest Options for Long Term Care

Stressed out? How to help manage the stressors...

By: Dana Wilke in a recent article on the Society for Human Resource Management SHRM

Study after study-and survey after survey-tell the same story: Modern workers feel stressed out on the job, and the stress is taking a toll on their sleep, health, relationships, productivity and sense of well-being.

Eight in 10 workers say they are stressed by at least one thing at work. About 1 in 2 workers in low-paying jobs say their job has a negative effect on their stress levels, while about 4 in 10 in medium- and high-paying jobs say the same, according to several sources cited by Happify Health, a New York City-based company that helps employees develop skills to reduce stress.

Among those sources were the 2016 Work and Well-Being Survey from the American Psychological Association and a 2016 study by the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

Yet at a time when jobs are arguably easier than ever before-because of automation, technology, employee-friendly laws and attractive benefits-why would the modern worker feel so stressed out?

Here's a graphic of the Top 5 Stressors:



So what can be done to manage these stress factors?

How Employee Training Can Help Prevent Stress



Increasing awareness of the signs of stress.



Learning to interrupt behavior patterns when the stress reaction is just beginning.



Learning skills of active coping and relaxation.



Developing a plan to minimize the stressors.



Practicing the above in low stress situations first to increase chances of early success and boost self confidence and motivation to continue.

[Read the complete article here.](#)

2018 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, July 26, 2018

Full Council Meeting

Location: Winter Park Town Hall Conference Rm, 50 Vasquez Rd., Winter Park, CO

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Approval of 2019 dues; approval of 2018 budget revisions; discussion re: Annual Planning Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 16, 2018

Full Council & EDD Board Annual Planning Meeting

Location: Airport Operations Center (AOC) Conference Rm, 1001 Owl Creek Rd, Aspen

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Agenda Items: Strategic Planning for 2019

Thursday, October 25, 2018

Full Council Meeting

Location: Community & Senior Center Fremont Rm, 83 Nancy's Place, Frisco, CO

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Review of draft 2019 budget

Thursday, December 6, 2018

Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting

Location: Eagle County Government Garden Level Classroom, 500 Broadway St., Eagle

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: 2018 budget revisions; approve 2019 budget; adopt 2019 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

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